

THE  
URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT  
OF ILFRACOMBE.

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Medical Officer's Report

For the Year ending 31st December, 1896.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

## Health of the Urban District of Ilfracombe,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1896.

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*To the Council of the Ilfracombe Urban District.*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to your Council my Annual Report on the Sanitary Condition and Health of Ilfracombe for the year 1896.

### VITAL STATISTICS.

Population (1891 Census) .....	7,692
Estimated Population, 1896 .....	8,500
Area in Statute Acres .....	5,350
Total Deaths registered .....	97
Death Rate per 1,000 population, 1891 Census .....	12·4
Total Deaths, exclusive of non-residents .....	88
Corrected Death Rate .....	10·3
Total Births Registered .....	175
Birth Rate per 1,000 population .....	21·2
Zymotic Death Rate per 1,000 estimated population.....	0·9
Notifications Received.....	44
Notification Rate per 1,000 population.....	5·1
Infant Mortality per 1,000 births .....	92·1

A true calculation of the Population of Ilfracombe and of the Vital Statistics thereon dependent is a somewhat difficult matter.

In the first place this Town is so rapidly growing, that every year as we are more removed from the date of the last census, we are the less sure what is the number of our resident population.

In the next place the fact that the population of Ilfracombe is during six months of the year swollen by the arrival of thousands of visitors, of whose number we can obtain no trustworthy record and yet who contribute a certain proportion of births and deaths to our register, has a disturbing effect on all our Vital Statistics, which is unknown among towns whose people are less migratory in their habits.

One of the best methods of estimating the probable increase of the resident inhabitants is by assuming that the rate of increase will have continued the same as held good in the previous ten years, and then to check this result by getting at the number of inhabited houses, from the assessment books of the latest date. By multiplying these inhabited assessments by the average number of livers in each house as shewn by means of the last census we cannot be far from our true population. Employing these methods, the population of Ilfracombe on the 1st of April, 1896, may be assumed as reaching 8,500.

As the Local Government Board "Table A" for 1896 indicates that the Death Rate must now be calculated on the population as estimated to the middle of 1896, it is perhaps well to refer to the methods of estimation made use of and to the selection of April as being the month in which the smallest number of strangers are sojourning among us.

### BIRTHS.

Total Births registered, 175. Birth Rate, 21·2. This is a low Local Birth Rate, the Birth Rate for England and Wales being 29·7 per 1,000.

This is probably explained by the fact that a considerable portion of those who augment the population of Ilfracombe from the outside, are persons who are retiring from the more active duties of business and family life.

### DEATHS.

The total Deaths resistered at all ages were 97, which shews a *crude* Death Rate on the census population of 1891 of 12·4. (Death Rate of England and Wales, 1896, 17·1). To arrive however at the *true Death Rate* of Ilfracombe we exclude all mortality "occurring within the District among persons not belonging thereto," and add the "deaths occurring outside the District among persons belonging thereto." The estimated population of Ilfracombe being 8,500, and the mortality duly corrected, the *net Death Rate* of Ilfracombe for the year 1896 is noteworthy as being only 10·3 per 1,000 population.

The factors which make up this *extraordinary low Death Rate* may be also noted with satisfaction, as notwithstanding the constant importation of infectious persons which is common to all watering places, the Zymotic Death Rate is only ·9 per 1,000 (England and Wales 2·1) and the Infant Death Rate 92·1 per 1,000 births (England and Wales 148).

No less than one-third of our deaths were registered over 65 years of age.



## WATER SUPPLY.

Notwithstanding the great deficiency in the rainfall during the spring and summer months the Town Public Supply has been constant and effective.\*

Samples regularly taken from the High and Low Level Service shew excellent filtration, particularly at the critical time when heavy rains set in at the close of a dry summer.

Hele and Lincombe Public Supplies held out with the exception of a shallow well in the old Turnpike Road leading to Hele.

At Upper Slade and Lee the private wells in a great measure failed for a period of some weeks.

For these hamlets an adequate supply was provided free of cost by your Council.

In November month the water in the Upper Storage Reservoir was slightly contaminated by Creosote oils washed from the new sleepers which were then being relaid under the metals of the L. & S.W.R. Line. The Railway Company have carried out small structural works which will prevent a recurrence of this incident.

Samples of water to the number of nine have been analyzed by the Medical Officer of Health.

The water mains have been extended to the "Toadswell" Estate.

## SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The Public Sewers and Outfalls, with their equipment of ventilating shafts, manholes, and automatic flushing tanks, have been maintained in excellent working order.

The Public Sewers have been either extended or relaid in certain portions of the district, viz.:—Chambercombe Road, Hele Road, Regent Place, 123 and 124, High Street, 93, 94 and 95, High Street, a portion of High Street near Post Office, and Horne Road.

A new 6-inch Vent Shaft has been erected in Torrs Park.

A comprehensive Survey and a Report on the Sewerage of the Town is being prepared by Mr. Mansergh, C.E., of London.

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\* January and February Rainfall was less than half the average, but the most marked peculiarity was the drought of May, in which month 0·05 inches rainfall was registered; a similar circumstance has not happened since May, 1876. Twice in January the Barometer stood higher than at any time since 1882.

The drains of various blocks of houses have been tested with smoke, and serious defects have been discovered, more particularly at Beaconsfield Terrace, Lewis's Passage, 123 and 124, High Street, Rock Terrace, &c.

The defects were duly reported to your Council, accompanied by plans prepared by the Sanitary Inspector, and are being efficiently dealt with.

Where infectious disease has occurred, house drains have been tested, and defects, when discovered, put right and re-tested.

Warcombe Cottage, Lee; and "Crow Croft," Slade; have been provided with sufficient drainage.

A new system of Sewerage and of Outfalls is required for the East District of Ilfracombe; but any improvements in the Western and Central Districts should probably be directed to the Outfalls and to alterations in private drains and connections, rather than to the main Sewers themselves.

#### PREVALENCE OF DISEASE.

CONTINUED FEVER remains entirely absent; it is many years since an attack has been notified.

ERYSIPELAS.—7 non-fatal attacks.

SCARLET FEVER.—15 non-fatal attacks.

WHOOPING COUGH.—Very few attacks; 1 fatal.

MEASLES was epidemic in the late Autumn; 2 deaths. Holy Trinity Infants' Schools were closed for a period of 21 days by order of your Council.

DIPHTHERIA AND MEMBRANOUS CROUP.—22 attacks; 3 fatal. The attacks occurred in the months of January, February, April, May, June and July.

Early and exact notification, attention paid to the regulations calculated to limit the spread of infection, the prolonged isolation of persons affected with Diphtheria, and the rapidity with which all cases of sore throat are now placed under the care of medical men, seem to have exercised a material effect in restricting the spread of this disease.

DIARRHŒA AND DYSENTERY have caused 2 deaths. Under this connection may be mentioned 6 deaths of infants from Dentition, Convulsions and Marasmus. This class of infantile deaths shews some diminution; it was 10 in 1895, and 8 in 1896.

The remarks made last year, that various circumstances indicate a connection between these cases and injudicious feeding, and that "It is probable that the use of milk and other



food which becomes tainted from carelessness in storage is a frequent factor in producing diseases of the Alimentary Canal," are still applicable to the present year.

CANCER.—Ilfracombe registered 8 deaths, being 7 less than the year before.

PHTHISIS.—Deaths seem pretty stationary: 8 in 1894, 9 in 1895, 8 in 1896, shewing the low rate of .9 per 1,000, the average for England being 1.6.

INFLUENZA has caused 2 deaths, as against 9 and 8 in the two previous years.

The last notification of Zymotic Disease was received September 23rd, so that this District has been free from preventible disease for a period of 96 days, and the public health is at the present date excellent.

### SCAVENGING.

The removal of house refuse is carried out by the Local Authority, under the direction of the Sanitary Inspector.

The new depôt is about a mile from the town.

The refuse on being received at the depôt is screened, the dry ashes being separated; all offensive matter is burnt in a large furnace erected for that purpose; while the old tins and earthenware are cast into a disused quarry.

The screened refuse is freely purchased by farmers.

The removal of waste from houses takes place twice weekly, and from the Hotels and Boarding Houses every morning at 6 a.m., especially during the summer months.

It is now proved that considerable expense is saved, and much nuisance avoided by this new method of dealing with the town refuse.

The street sweepings go directly to the land.

### NOTIFICATION ACT.

This Act works in a smooth and effectual manner, and, so far as appears, is fully complied with.

The inclusion of Measles among the Notifiable Diseases has been discussed by your Council, and will probably be adopted.

The total attacks notified have been 44, as against 56 in the year 1895. The notifications per 1,000 population are 5.1 (last year 7.2); viz: Scarlet Fever, 15; Diphtheria, 21; Membranous Croup, 1; Erysipelas, 7; Total, 44.

See Local Government Board Table "B."

Notification returns for each week are also supplied to the Local Government Board, who in return forward similar information as to the watering places and large towns of England.

### ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

Mullacott Hospital is effective for Small-pox cases.

A block of buildings has been erected and properly equipped, accommodating four infectious persons, at Bickleighscombe; the roads and approaches have been laid out and metalled. The floor area, cubic space, and other details are strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Board.

A house within a distance of 400 feet has been secured, and provides accommodation for a caretaker, two nurses, and for the cooking and washing service of the Hospital. It has been partly supplied with furniture, the property of the District Council.

Two insurances have been effected to the value of £500, covering Hospital and furniture.

Telephonic communication is in course of completion.

Sufficient boundaries and gates have been erected, and the grounds planted in an ornamental manner.

### DISINFECTION

Is practised by Sanitary Inspector and disinfectants supplied.

No apparatus is yet provided, but a loan has been obtained for the purchase of one.

Thirty-one houses and numerous infected articles of clothing, &c., disinfected during the year.

The Isolation Hospital at Mullacott was thoroughly disinfected and whitelimed after being occupied by infectious persons, and all bedding, &c., disinfected.

A portion of the bedding and other equipment has been removed to Bickleighscombe Hospital, and is always kept well aired and clean for the reception of patients.

The following precautions are taken to prevent the spread of Infectious disease:—

Houses, clothing, and all infected materials are disinfected after termination of illness.

The circulation of notices prohibiting certain children from attending school, also setting forth information as to the removal of infected persons and materials, and the general precautions necessary to be observed.

Home isolation is secured as far as possible; personal advice is given; and each house wherein attacks are notified, and the precautions therein used for isolation, are inspected.

Disinfectants are supplied on application.

The smoke test is applied to houses where infectious illness has occurred.

The Public Shelter is watered daily with a solution of Permanganate of Potash and properly ventilated.

A Trained Nurse is employed by the Local Authority, who visits and attends to persons suffering from infectious illness, and special cases are removed to the Isolation Hospital.

Teachers of Public Elementary Schools are asked to send home children suffering from suspicious sore throat, or rashes, and to advise the Sanitary Authority without loss of time.

The Sewers are periodically flushed and disinfectants used freely.

### BAKEHOUSES.

These are 12 in number, and are inspected and whitelimed.

Notice was served on the occupier of one Bakehouse to remove a slop water gully into yard outside, which notice has been complied with.

### SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Number on register, eight.

They are inspected and regulated.

One building unlicensed is used for slaughtering purposes. This house is not exempted from license and registration by having been in use previous to 1848.

There are two which are so exempted, and their owners decline to take out licenses.

There is one Public Slaughterhouse.

The general condition of these buildings is regular and clean.



## DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS ORDER, 1885.

The number of Registered Dairies is thirty-three.

Three have been struck off the register, two put on.

They are all inspected and regulated.

One cowshed has been pulled down and re-built according to deposited plans.

The house drain of one premises occupied as a dairy is very unsatisfactory.

The cowshed and surroundings of one cow-keeper are under notice, and have been reported as being in an unclean condition.

Notice to provide a separate store for milking utensils and to cleanse and whitewash cowsheds was served and complied with in another case.

Notices to whitewash dairies and cowsheds have been served on 11 persons and complied with in each case.

## PUBLIC MARKETS.

The cleansing of the Markets is carried out by men in the employ of the Local Authority, under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector, and the result is infinitely more satisfactory than when this work was left in the hands of the lessee.

## PETROLEUM STORES.

These are seven in number, and are inspected, licensed and regulated.

In each case the requirements of the Petroleum Act and of the Local Authority have been complied with.

## GAS SUPPLY.

The gas supplied by the Ilfracombe Gas Company has been examined according to the requirements of the Acts and has been found to be of an average illuminating power of 16·1 candles and free from sulphuretted hydrogen.

The standard illuminating power has been raised by the new Act from 14 to 15 candle power.

An Act of Parliament has been obtained for the removal of the Gas Works to the hamlet of Hele.

## FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

The fish and fruit shops have been inspected.

A large quantity of fruit was seized during summer months and taken before a J.P., who ordered the same to be destroyed as unfit for food of man, and a circular warning was sent drawing the attention of the dealers in fruit that your Council had resolved that legal proceedings would be taken against persons exposing or selling vegetables and fruit unfit for the use of man.

## BYE-LAWS.

Additional Bye-Laws are required under Section 23 of the Public Health Act Amendment Act, 1890, for regulating the height of rooms, the supply of water to closets, the paving of private yards and other matters of a cognate nature.

## ACTS AND BYE-LAWS IN FORCE.

Same as in 1895.

## HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT AND PUBLIC HEALTH ACT.

Inspections of the whole of the working class houses to the number of 901, under the above Acts, have been carried out during the year, and the following representations have been made, as regards structural defects, to your Council by the Medical Officer of Health:—

Dwellings unfit for human habitation, one house at Hele, Nos. 3 and 22, Compass Hill, Nos. 9 and 10, Water Street.

Dwellings having structural defects, one house at Hele, Nos. 3 and 22, Compass Hill, Nos. 9 and 10, Water Street.

As regards defective drainage, blocks of houses situated in Beaconsfield Terrace, Lewis Passage.

As regards repairs and improvements, 105 separate premises.

The following houses have been closed as unfit for human habitation, Nos. 9 and 10, Water Street, Nos. 3 and 22, Compass Hill.

The following delapidated properties have been pulled down to make way for modern buildings, No. 54, Fore Street and cottage in rear; cottage, Quayfield Lane.

## FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

H.M's. Inspector of Factories, South-Western District, has made complaint of certain structural defects in two laundries in this town.

The defects have been remedied under notice from this Authority.



# TABLE

Shewing number of Notifications received month by month, within the Urban Sanitary District of Ilfracombe, for the year ending 31st December, 1896.

Month.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Group.	Typhoid Fever.	Scarlet Fever.	Erysipelas.	Puerperal Fever.	Totals for Month.
January . . . .	6	....	....	4	1	....	11
February ..	1	....	....	2	1	....	4
March . . . . .	....	....	....	2	1	....	3
April . . . . .	3	....	....	....	2	....	5
May . . . . .	6	....	....	1	....	....	7
June . . . . .	1	....	....	....	....	....	1
July . . . . .	3	....	....	4	....	....	7
August . . . . .	....	....	....	2	....	....	2
September ..	1	1	....	....	1	....	3
October . . . .	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
November ..	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
December ..	....	....	....	....	1	....	1
Totals for 12 Months ..	21	1	....	15	7	....	44

# TABLE

Shewing Deaths from Seven Zymotic Diseases during the year ending December 31st,  
1896, month by month.

Month.	Diarrhoea or Dysentery.	Diphtheria and Membranous Croup.	Small-pox.	Typhoid Fever.	Scarlet Fever.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Totals for Month.
January . . . .	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
February ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
March . . . . .	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
April . . . . .	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
May . . . . .	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
June . . . . .	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
July . . . . .	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
August . . . . .	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
September ..	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
October . . . .	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	3
November ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
December ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 12 Months ..	2	3	...	...	...	2	1	8

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD TABLE "A."

Table of DEATHS, during the Year 1896, in the Ilfracombe Urban Sanitary District, classified according to Diseases, Ages and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.  [Columns for Population and Births are in Table B.]  A	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES.							I	MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.																							
	At all ages.  B	Under 1 Year.  C	1 and under 5  D	5 and under 15  E	15 and under 25  F	25 and under 65  G	65 and upwards.  H		1  Small-pox.	2  Scarlatina.	3  Diphtheria.	4  Membranous Croup.	5	6	7	8	9	10  Cholera.	11  Erysipelas.	12  Measles.	13  Whooping Cough.	14  Diarrhea and Dysentery.	15  Rheumatic Fever.	16  Phthisis.	17  Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	18  Heart Disease.	19  Cancer.	20  Injuries.	21  All other Diseases.	22  TOTAL.		
													FEVERS.																			
													Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.															
Ilfracombe	97	19	7	6	5	28	32	Under 5...			2	1								2	1	2			8	9	6	8	3	13	26	
							5 upwards																							37	71	
The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above Records of Mortality.																																
Deaths occurring outside the District among persons belonging thereto.	1							Under 5...																						1	1	
Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto.	10							Under 5...																	1			1		7	9	

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD TABLE "B."

Table of POPULATION, BIRTHS, and of NEW CASES of INFECTIOUS SICKNESS coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1896, in the Ilfracombe Urban Sanitary District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.													NUMBER OF SUCH CASES REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES IN THE SEVERAL LOCALITIES FOR TREATMENT IN ISOLATION HOSPITAL.												
	Census 1891.	Estimated to middle of 1896.			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Group.	FEVERS.					Cholera.	Erysipelas.			Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Group.	FEVERS.					Cholera.	Erysipelas.		
									Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.									Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.				
A	B	C	D	E																										
Ilfracombe	7,692	8,500	175	Under 5... 5 upwards		15	21	1							7															

The "Notification of Infectious Disease" has been compulsory in this District since 1889.

Two Isolation Hospitals provided, one at Mullacott and the other at Bickleighscombe.





*THE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF  
ILFRACOMBE.*

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**SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR 1896.**

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During the year the following notices have been served :— as regards Infectious Diseases, 113 ; Housing of the Working Classes Act, 15 ; Dairies, Cowshed and Milk Shops Order, 20 ; Whiteliming and Cleansing, 35 ; Defective Drainage, W.Cs., &c., 37 ; various other Nuisances, such as Keeping Animals, Accumulations, &c., 120 ; all of which have been complied with, except two.

The Inspector of Nuisances has made frequent inspections of Bakehouses, Slaughterhouses, Cowsheds, Dairies, Stables, &c.

He has supervised the cleansing of the Public Markets, the work of Scavengers employed in the Removal of House Refuse and in Street Cleansing.

Also the tracing of Private Drains, and the application of the Smoke Test to house drains, &c.

He has attended to the removal of patients to the Isolation Hospital, the general service of the Hospital, and the disinfection and cleansing of the same.

He has obtained samples of water for submission to the Medical Officer of Health for analysis.

He has disinfected 31 Private Houses, and bedding, clothing, &c., belonging thereto.

He has accompanied the Medical Officer of Health in all inspections carried out by him under the Public Health Act, 1875 and 1890 ; Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890 ; Dairies, Cowsheds and Milk Shops Order, 1885 ; Workshops and Factories Act and to the houses where Infectious Diseases have occurred.

He has kept all books and made all reports required by your Council.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

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The examination of Plans deposited with your Council relating to New Buildings and Drainage, is now much more effective than was practicable some years since, and in the buildings themselves strict compliance with deposited plans is enforced.

More control should be exercised over the numbering of houses and the naming of new streets, but the plurality of names and of numbers given to one building which at times occurs is even more inconvenient than the entire absence of numbers.

The Sanitary Inspector does his work well, combining zeal with good judgment in the discharge of his duties.

The excellence of the Public Elementary School Buildings and the large area of public land available for recreation is effective in good results on the health of the children.

The average Death Rate for the 10 years period is 15·2, and each succeeding period shews a decline, notwithstanding the increased density of population.

**The Death Rate for the present year, 10·3, is the lowest yet recorded.**

The determination of your Council that Bye-laws and Sanitary Acts, when once they have been adopted, should not remain a dead letter within your district, but should be actively enforced, contributes in no small measure to the happy improvement in the Vital Statistics of your District, and reflects the willingness of all classes of its inhabitants to assist in promoting Sanitation, cost what it may, provided that Ilfracombe continues to hold a worthy place in the foremost rank of English Health Resorts.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

**EDWYN SLADE-KING**

*(M.D., Dip. in Public Health),*

Medical Officer of Health.

Bickleighscombe,

February 20th, 1897.





